

# Nemadi dialect

The **Nemadi** are small hunting tribe of eastern Mauritania. Their language is according to some sources a dialect of Hassaniyya, according to others a mixture of Zenaga, Soninke and Hassaniyya.<sup>[2][3]</sup> The name "Nemadi" itself appears to come from Soninke, where it means "master of dogs".

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## Accounts of the language

According to Robert Arnaud (1906), "around Tichit the Nemadi employ a dialect called Azeir which is close to Soninke." Chudeau (1913), perhaps following him, adds that "We have little information on their language, which M. Delafosse classifies provisionally with Soninké." However, Brosset (1932) says that they speak Hassaniyya, and that "their special vocabulary does not consist of vocables different from Hassaniyya, but of technical terms which need has forced them to create, which are forged from Arabic, Zenaga, and maybe Azer."

Ech Chinguetti's *Kitab El Wasit* says that "The Nmadi speak the dialect common to all the Moors (i.e. Hassaniyya). However, they do not pronounce the final *m* of the affixed second person plural pronoun, so they say: *as-Salam alayku* ("peace be upon you") for *alaikum*, and *kayfa haluku* ("how are you?") for *halukum*."

Laforgue claims that they speak "Zenati", i.e. Berber, a claim seen by Hermans as "very improbable".

According to Gerteiny (1967), they speak "their own dialect, probably a mixture of Azêr [Soninke], Zenaga, and Hassaniyya, called *Ikôku* by the Moors. They express themselves in brief idiomatic phrases, and the language has neither singular nor plural."

The Ethnologue's former description of their language appears to be based solely on this source.<sup>[4]</sup> Later editions say that "The Nemadi (Ikoku) are an ethnic group of 200 (1967) that speak Hassaniyya, but they have special morphemes for dogs, hunting, and houses".<sup>[1]</sup>

Hermans' opinion is that "the language spoken by the Nemadi in general (there may remain some Azer-speaking Nemadi) is Hassaniyya. But one must recognize certain peculiarities", including the lack of plural, certain argot-like expressions (cf. Fondacci), and the technical terms (cf. Brosset, Fondacci, Gabus.)

Nemadi	
	Ikoku
Native to	Mali, Mauritania
Region	Timbuktu into Mauritania
Native speakers	(200 cited 1967) <sup>[1]</sup>
Language family	<div>Afro-Asiatic<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Semitic<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Central Semitic<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Arabic<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Maghrebi<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Hassaniyya<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Nemadi</b></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></div>
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	–
Glottolog	<i>None</i>

## See also

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- Imraguen people

## In literature

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The Nemadi feature in a side story in Bruce Chatwin's semi-fictional book *The Songlines* about Aboriginal Australians.

## References

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1. Hassaniyya (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/mey/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Christopher Moseley, *Encyclopedia of the World's Endangered Languages*, Routledge, 2007, ISBN 978-0-7007-1197-0 p. 623: No data exists on this language. It is not unlikely that the language can be linked to Azer, Zenaga, Soninke and/or Hassaniya
3. Muriel Devey, *La Mauritanie*, KARTHALA Editions, 2005 ISBN 978-2-84586-583-9, p.39: "leur langue est un mélange d'hassaniya, de zenaga et d'azer"
4. Nemadi entry in the Languages of Mali (<http://www.christusrex.org/www1/pater/ethno/Mali.html>) Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20070929140454/http://www.christusrex.org/www1/pater/ethno/Mali.html>) 2007-09-29 at the Wayback Machine, 13th edition (1996)

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